



Catholic Schools Office Diocese of Birmingham

Dear Members of the Diocese of Birmingham School Communities,

In demonstration of our motto, “Boldly Catholic, Academically Excellent, Rooted in Truth,” the Diocese of Birmingham Catholic Schools maintain the same standards of excellence during events of prolonged building closures as we do when our buildings are open. Our Catholic schools provide such an irreplaceable value to our community through top-notch instruction, exceptional faith formation, instilling feelings of belonging, service opportunities, experiences in the arts, and social-emotional learning- none of which stops if our buildings close. The true commitment to education and response to the call to serve demonstrated by our teachers, our staffs, our administrators, and our pastors during these times is an amazing, beautiful thing to behold because it truly embodies our Gospel teachings.

In addition to the aforementioned value provided, our schools, and the people within them, provide routine, stability, and support for our students, and these Guidelines for the Continuation of Academic and Spiritual Education (C.A.S.E.) serve to articulate the provisions needed to transfer all of these elements from our schools to learning at home.

Let’s commit to this new endeavor as a partnership between the Catholic Schools Office, the schools, and the families with a willingness to give each other grace, with flexibility, and with understanding on each end, as we all adjust to new routines within our school, work, and family lives. With this commitment from all of us- from administrators, from teachers, from staff, from parents, from students- we will all learn, we will all grow, and we will all end up with an excellent result. We continue to offer prayers of gratitude in having you as part of our Diocese of Birmingham Catholic school community and are grateful for your support and commitment to Catholic education.

Sincerely,

Margaret Dubose

Margaret Dubose

Director of Catholic Schools

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Catholic Schools Office
Diocese of Birmingham

Guidelines for Continuation of Academic and Spiritual Education
(C.A.S.E. Learning)

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INSTRUCTION

Instruction will be delivered through a variety of formats as determined by each school, taking into consideration:

- the age of the students
- the resources available within the school and within the home
- the needs of the lesson
- essential learning/standards for the grade level

Traditional and technology-based formats may be utilized and will be aligned with a critical learning objective/standard for the grade level.

Students' familiarity with methods and modes of instruction will be a priority. When a new method is to be used, support will be provided to students, parents, and/or staff when needed.

Teachers will communicate assignments and work expectations on a regular, articulated schedule.

Flexibility with modes of instruction and deadlines will be a priority as much as possible.

Just as during a typical school day, teachers will have a designated office hour/planning time for communication with families.

Feedback on student work will be provided on a regular basis and through a means designated by the school, depending on modes of instruction being utilized.

Special area teachers will collaborate with classroom teachers for cross-curricular activities when applicable and will also provide instructional activities specific to their special area.

Religious instruction will occur through direct and cross-curricular instruction and also through student and family-oriented activities.

Safe environment procedures (see included policy and addendum) will be enforced and utilized in all electronic instruction and communication.

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ASSESSMENT

In alignment with our C.A.S.E Learning instructional methods, assessment will be delivered through a variety of formats as determined by each school, taking into consideration:

- the age of the students
- the resources available within the school and within the home
- the needs of the lesson

Traditional and technology-based formats may be utilized for assessment and will be aligned with the learning objective/standard used for instruction.

Teachers will provide feedback on designated assignments and/or communicate regularly with parents to convey student progress and performance.

Weekly assignments, video check-ins, projects, writing assignments, rubrics, and online quiz/test formats may be utilized for assessment.

Grades will be posted and can be viewed in FACTS/Renweb.

ATTENDANCE

Parents are to report absences to the designated individual at the school. An absence is to be reported if a student is unable to attend a web-based class session or is unable to participate in class assignments for that day due to illness or other factors. The school's attendance policies for excused and unexcused absences will apply.

Attendance will be based on parent report, completion of assignments, and/or contact with the teacher. Schools will contact families when work is not being completed to make sure the student is okay and to provide support if there are academic, technological, and/or family circumstance barriers to completing the work.

The school's/teacher's policies for make up work apply to C.A.S.E. Learning. Recordings of live sessions will be available for students when applicable.

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BEHAVIOR

Teachers will develop and articulate behavioral expectations and classroom management procedures to maintain respectful, appropriate interactions and to ensure a productive learning environment. Behaviors considered to be contrary to these expectations can be documented according to the school's and/or diocese's discipline policies and codes of conduct. Parents will be notified of discipline issues with their child.

School and diocesan policies for academic honesty pertain to the C.A.S.E. Learning environment.

Technology specific behavioral expectations for C.A.S.E. Learning include but are not limited to:

- No taking or posting photos, videos, recordings, or screenshots of students or of teachers at any time.
- Respectful, appropriate language and content will be used in all C.A.S.E. Learning platforms
- Students are to stay on-task. Chat, live, and other types of discussion are to occur only as directed by the teacher and according to the educational topic at hand.

COMMUNICATION

The school will continue to communicate with families in a variety of ways to convey information, to offer support, to maintain community, and to assess needs and improve processes.

Schools will communicate which individuals and the methods of communication that are designated to receive different types of information, if it is different during C.A.S.E. Learning (e.g., who and how to report absences, get technology assistance, etc.)

Families should communicate hardship that may have an impact on student performance and/or attendance, so the school can help support and remove barriers if possible.

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FINANCE AND OPERATIONAL VITALITY

Tuition payments will continue through the FACTS system or through the school's payment policies established during enrollment and in the school handbook. For payments made through non-electronic means, the school will communicate how to submit those payments.

Requests for financial aid will occur according to school handbook policies.

Enrollment and re-enrollment processes will occur according to the school's deadlines. Any change to the existing processes, such as a move to an electronic form or a mail-in process, will be communicated by the school.

Seeking enrollment of new students may be of difficulty due to the social distancing impact on giving tours, holding school social events, and meeting with potential new families. Give special consideration to singing the many praises of the Catholic school to other families who could benefit.

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SAFE ENVIRONMENT PROCEDURES FOR THE PROTECTION OF YOUTH

Maintaining safe practices for our electronic communications and for all of our interactions with students is always our main priority. Diocesan policy for Electronic Communication with Minors (Policy #4207) and the Diocese of Birmingham Child and Youth Code of Conduct, along with an addendum developed due to this time of increased electronic interaction, will guide staff and students in utilizing protective practices.

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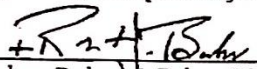
4702

Students

Electronic Communication with Minors

Policy adopted: October 2014
Diocesan Catholic School Board

Approved by Bishop Robert J. Baker, S.T.D.


Bishop Robert J. Baker, S.T.D.

Dec 10, 2014
Date

Preface

All Catholic school personnel who are employed by the Diocese of Birmingham or serve as volunteers in our schools must follow the guidelines in the *Diocese of Birmingham Policy for Electronic Communication with Minors*.

- 1.0 For purposes of this policy, the following definitions apply:
 - 1.1 School Social Media Website (here-in-after "School Media") A social network page, blog or internet website/tool created by an employee, cleric or volunteer for which the purpose is to conduct official school business.
 - 1.2 Personal Social Media Website (here-in-after "Personal Media") A social network page, blog or internet website/tool created by an employee, cleric or volunteer for which the purpose is to share personal communication with family, friends and/or associates.
 - 1.3 Web-based Educational Applications Websites that facilitate interaction with educational information specific to academic instruction such as You Tube, Mathletics, Google Apps, Wikispaces and any other student/teacher sign on products.
 - 1.4 Other Electronic Communication Electronic communication technologies that are not defined as Social Media. Examples include: cell phones, land-line telephone, email, texting, video conferencing etc.

- 2.0 When communicating with minors using School Media, Personal Media, Web-Based Educational Applications or Other Electronic Communication, it should be noted that:
 - 2.1 The purpose of such communication is to provide information and/or comments related to school work or event(s) and not for socialization or other personal interaction.
 - 2.2 Counseling of minors through such communication methods is not permitted.
 - 2.3 Parents must be notified of the methods of communication that are used in each school and must be granted access to participate in such communications.





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- Parents should have student access codes to all school-based accounts at any time.
- 2.4 School Media websites may not be used to communicate with minors below the age of 19 unless parents have equal access. Personal Media websites must not be used for official school communication. This includes but is not limited to Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, Vine, Google Circle, Linked In, and photo sharing apps.
 - 2.5 Teachers may use “closed” web-based educational applications with students. A closed system cannot be accessed without being a member of a group and usually requires ID entry that is validated by the server and the content filter. Such use requires administrative approval and monitoring by two school faculty members.
 - 2.6 There must be at least two adults with administrative rights for each school media account used for school communication.
 - 2.7 If a school media site is to be used, the administrators must create a group that both minors and adults can join and interact without allowing full access to one another's profile.
 - 2.8 Personal media websites and other electronic communication may not be used to communicate with an individual minor within one's school. In unusual cases where a response is needed, one must copy the response to another adult within the school and maintain a copy of the message.
 - 2.9 Acceptable hours of communication with minors via other electronic communication shall be between 7:00 am and 9:00 pm. Communication outside of these acceptable hours may be used only in emergency situations or to communicate time sensitive information related to the school or a school related event. Communications via other electronic communication should be to a group rather than to individual minors, where practical.
 - 2.10 The depiction of minors in photos or videos on school media sites may only be used with parental permission.
 - 2.11 The Diocese considers each and every Diocesan employee as a representative of the Diocese of Birmingham in Alabama. Consequently, the Diocese expects its employees to be cognizant of this most important responsibility and conduct their lives, both professional and private, in accordance with the teachings, beliefs and spirit of the Roman Catholic Church. Any information on an employee's social media website that causes embarrassment to the Diocese must be avoided. Diocesan trademarks or logos can't be used on personal websites.

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Diocese of Birmingham Safe Environment Guidelines for Web-Based Learning

The Diocesan Schools Policy for Electronic Communication with Minors (Policy #4702) and the Diocese of Birmingham Child and Youth Protection Code of Conduct are in effect and must be followed during this time of remote learning. This document serves as an addendum to Policy 4702 and any school-based regulations.

1. Behavioral expectations and classroom management procedures must be developed and articulated to maintain respectful, appropriate language and interactions. This will ensure a productive learning environment.
2. Keep online platforms as consistent as possible both for ease of use and for ease of monitoring.
3. Video based instruction and learning
 - a. Should only take place in a common space (e.g., dining room) within the home. This applies to teachers and to students.
 - b. Professionalism should be maintained in regard to dress for teachers and for students.
 - c. Should involve a group audience. In the event that one-on-one conferencing between a student and teacher is needed, two-deep leadership will apply, with a school administrator or other trained, designated school staff member on the conference as well.
 - d. If it is possible within the application used for video instruction, record sessions.
4. Text based, chat, and discussion board applications
 - a. Parents and school administrators should have notice of and access to these applications.
 - b. When possible, utilize applications that allow for chat and discussion board history to be saved.

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